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Message Text

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14
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

SAJ-01 /070 W
---------- 099465
R 121516Z SEP 75
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0399
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT,NO
SUBJ: LABOR AND CONSERVATIVES OPTIMISTIC AS NATIONWIDE MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS DRAW NEAR

REF: (A) OSLO A-157
(B) OSLO A-159

1. BOTH NORWAY'S GOVERNING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY AND ITS CONSERVATIVE ARCH-RIVALS ARE OPTIMISTIC GOING INTO THE SEP 15 NATIONWIDE MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS. LABOR'S RIVAL ON THE LEFT, THE SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY(SV), SEEMS DIVIDED,DEMORALIZED AND PESSIMISTIC. THE ONE-MONTH ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN RESTRAINED,IN THE NORWEGIAN TRADITION. IT HAS BEEN MARKED MOSTLY BY GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION AND BY LABOR-CONSERVATIVE POLARIZATION IN A DEBATE OVER WHETHER SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY ARE COMPATIBLE, OR WHETHER IT IS SLANDEROUS TO EVEN ASK SUCH A QUESTION. THE USUALLY-VOCAL SV, PREOCCUPIED BY INTERNAL DISSENSION, HAS BEEN NOTABLY
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SILENT AND THE PARTIES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE POLITICAL

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SPECTRUM HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT OVERSHADOWED. CAMPAIGNING
ON NORWAY'S ONLY TV CHANNEL(OF THE STATE RADIO-TV
MONOPOLY) IS LIMITED TO ONE JOURNALIST-DOMINATED PANEL
SHOW FOR EACH PARTY,PLUS ONE JOINT PROGRAM FOR ALL
PARTIES. OPPORTUNITIES ARE ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE AMPLE
ON THE ONE RADIO STATION. THUS THE CAMPAIGN IS CON-
DUCTED MAINLY THROUGH THE PRESS,PUBLIC MEETINGS
ATTENDED MOSTLY BY THE PARTY FAITHFUL, AND THROUGH CONTACT
AND LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION.

2. THREE RECENT POLLS HAVE ENCOURAGED LABOR, AS HAVE
POSITIVE REPORTS FROM ELECTION WORKERS AND SV'S
VIRTUAL CAMPAIGN ABSENCE. POLLS COMMISSIONED BY TWO
OSLO NEWSPAPERS INDICATE THAT LABOR MIGHT ACTUALLY
GAIN IN OSLO, RATHER THAN LOSE, AS EXPECTED, THAT THE
NON-SOCIALIST/SOCIALIST BALANCE MAY REMAIN ABOUT
EVEN AND THAT CHANCES FOR ANOTHER LABOR MAYOR, INSTEAD
OF A CONSERVATIVE, MAY BE ABOUT FIFTY-FIFTY. THE
MID-AUGUST NATIONAL GALLUP POLL, PUBLISHED SEP 11,
SHOWED LABOR AND CONSERVATIVES UP(34.5 AND 20.9 PER CENT
RESPECTIVELY), SV DOWN(8.5 PER CENT) AND THE NATIONAL NON-
SOCIALIST/SOCIALIST BALANCE CONTINUING AT ABOUT 54-44PERCENT,
AS IT HAS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. IT WAS 52-47 IN THE
1973 NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.)
THE POLL WAS TAKEN WHILE SV'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS WERE
BEING BARED BY THE MEDIA. LABOR IS CONFIDENT THAT ITS
GAINS HAVE CONTINUED SINCE THE POLL AND, THAT IT WILL
DO BETTER THAN IN THE STORTING ELECTION OF 1973(35.3PERCENT). IT
HAS NO HOPES OF EQUALLING ITS 41.9PERCENT IN THE 1971 MUN-
ICIPAL ELECTIONS, BUT SV,DESPITE ITS SETBACKS, IS
BOUND TO DO BETTER THAN ITS PRE-MERGER COMPONENTS
DID THEN(6.6PERCENT) SO THE BALANCE BETWEEN SOCIALISTS
AND NON-SOCIALISTS MAY BE LITTLE CHANGED. THIS COULD
VARY WIDELY FROM COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY, HOWEVER,
AND THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS ARE BRAND NEW.

3. AT THIS STAGE IT APPEARS THE NON-SOCIALISTS WILL
RETAIN BERGER,STAVANGER, AND KRISTIANSAND, WHILE
TRONDHEIM AND TROMSO ARE LIKELY TO BE LABOR'S. IN THE
NORTH,WHERE THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET
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AND CONFINED TO LOCAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES,LABOR
IS EXPECTED TO HOLD ITS OWN IN NORTHERNMOST FINN-
MARK BUT LOSE SOMEWHAT IN THE TWO OTHER PROVINCES.
HERE AS IN OTHER AREAS IT
APPEARS THAT THE MARKS LEFT ON THE 1973 STORTING
ELECTION, WHICH WAS MUCH INFLUENCED BY THE EEC REFERENDUM,
WILL BE REFLECTED TO SOME EXTENT THIS TIME IN THE
MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS.

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4. AS NOTED IN REF A, THE ELECTIONS NEXT WEEK ARE MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL ONLY AND HAVE NO DIRECT EFFECT NATIONALLY, BUT DO INDICATE NATIONAL TRENDS, AFFECT PARTY MORALE AND SET THE SCENE FOR PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS TWO YEARS HENCE.
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